

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,194,676 to Takahashi et al. (hereinafter “Takahashi”).

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Claim 1 has been amended and new claims 5-10 have been added to further define the invention. Accordingly, claims 1-10 are presently pending.

Statement of Substance of the Interview

On June 19, 2007, Applicant’s representatives conducted an interview with the Examiner to discuss the previously applied art with respect to proposed claim amendments. In the interview with the Examiner, the Examiner indicated that amending claim 1 to recite that the cover part and the lever are formed monolithically or as a single piece would likely overcome the rejection of claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Takahashi. However, the Examiner stated concerns with respect to U.S. Patent No. 5,646,384 to Noro et al. (hereinafter “Noro”). Furthermore, the Examiner noted that the reinforcing ribs of the present invention may be a novel feature. Finally, the Examiner indicated that any of the proposed amendments would require further search and consideration.

After further consideration of Noro, Applicant respectfully notes that Noro does not teach or suggest at least, “a pair of fitting recessed portions formed in opposed side portions of the mounting part outside of the cover part” or “a lever support portion including a pair of shaft portions with which the pair of fitting recessed portions are respectively fitted...,” as recited in amended independent claim 1.

The Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Takahashi. Applicant traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

As discussed during the Interview, Applicant respectfully submits that Takahashi does not teach at least “[a] mounting part and [a] lever formed monolithically...,” as recited in amended independent claim 1. By contrast, Takahashi teaches “the rear end of the operating member 7 is secured to base portion of the operating lever 3....” In other words, the operating member 7 and operating lever 3 are not formed monolithically; they are separate pieces.

As pointed out in MPEP § 2131, “[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim.” Thus, “[a] claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Col. of California, 2 USPQ 2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987).”

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully requests that the

rejection of dependent claims 2-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn at least because of their dependence from independent claim 1 and the reasons set forth above.

New Claims 5-10

Applicant has added new claims 5-10 to further define the invention. Applicant respectfully asserts that new claims 5-10 are allowed over the applied art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of the response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

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If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 11, 2007

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